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Health, Inc.

**IBHP** INTEGRATED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PLAN

# Connections

BPA Health, Inc. • Integrated Behavioral Health Plan • Summer 2004

## Teaching Your Children Values



The values we teach our children will be their guiding principles for a lifetime. Values protect them from dangerous influences and temptations common in our culture. Too often we get caught up in every day life - our job, soccer practice, cheerleading events, yard work - and we forget that children start developing both conscious and unconscious values when they are preschool age.

We tend to believe that their teachers will teach them the values needed to allow them to succeed in life. Teachers play a vital role in teaching academic functions, language, and social skills. The role of imparting values fundamentally belongs to parents. So, what do we as parents think are values worth passing along to our children?

In the book titled, Teaching Your Children Values by Linda and Richard Eyre, the authors tried to

determine if there are universal values that are important to us as parents as well as our children. In going through this exercise, they developed the following definition to direct our focus as parents to values that are important to us:

***“A true and universally acceptable “value”  
is one that produces behavior that is beneficial both to the  
practitioner and to those on whom it is practiced.”***

For example, Honesty is defined as a value because it benefits both the practitioner and the persons on whom it is practiced.

Nearly every day something happens that offers you a chance to teach your kids about values. For example, imagine that your four-year-old son just “borrowed” a pack of gum from the grocery store, and you caught him. It’s your big chance to make a lasting impression on him about what’s right and wrong.

To do so, try to keep the following points in mind:

- **Hold your child accountable for his actions.** Resist the temptation to make excuses for your child. What’s more, try to make the consequence fit the “crime.” In this example, you can convey your message by having your son return the gum to the store manager and admit the wrongdoing.
- **Deliver your message of morality in a calm manner** so that your child understands it and remembers it.
- **Keep reprimands short and to the point.** Long lectures are a waste of everyone’s time and energy. Once your child has heard “the point,” a few minutes of time out for contemplation is appropriate.

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# What is Your Style of Communication?

**A** common source of stress centers on problems in how we interact with others. When we think of ourselves as being pushed around, not listened to, and not able to stand up for ourselves, it can be very draining on our self-esteem and level of stress. It can also be very stressful when we act in angry ways that drive people away from us and leave us feeling alone, misunderstood, and hostile. The way we relate to others is vital to our happiness and level of contentment.

There are three fundamental styles of interacting with others - Aggressive, Passive, and Assertive.

Assertiveness is the middle ground between passive behaviors and aggressive behaviors.



**AGGRESSIVE** includes fighting, threatening, accusing, intimidating, venting and letting off steam without regard for others' feelings. Although aggression may make us feel in control and can help us get our way, the cost to us is increased anger and stress, as well as strained relationships.

**PASSIVE** means letting others push us around, easily intimidated, and avoiding any type of conflict or uncomfortable situations. When we are passive, we may experience less direct

rejection and conflict. However, in the long run, passive people experience more stress in terms of poor self-esteem and being taken advantage of by others.

We are being **ASSERTIVE** when we stand up for our rights and do not let others take advantage of us. At the same time, though, we are sensitive to other peoples' feelings and needs. The advantage to being assertive is that you can often get what you want, usually without making others mad. Assertive behavior allows you to act in your own best interest without guilt.

In terms of developing more assertive communication, here are some tips:

- Be specific in your requests and in describing your feelings. If there is a problem, give a specific rather than general description.

- Use "I" Statements

I think...

I feel...

I want...

Example: "I think we spend a lot of time talking about your interests, and I feel irritated that we hardly ever talk about mine. I want our conversations to be more balanced."

Also, much of assertive communication involves listening to others in a way that shows you are paying attention and respect their opinion. Try to give your full attention and paraphrase what the speaker says. Ask for clarification if you do not understand something.

## Other resources:

- [The Art of Being Assertive](#)  
by Jennifer Curtet
- [If I'm So Special, Why Do I Feel So Ordinary?](#)  
by Dr. Kimberly Ventus-Darks

# Goal Setting & Positive Thinking Go Hand in Hand

## Positive Thinking

Setting goals is a positive step. Your first goal might be to become a more positive thinker. People who are optimistic tend to be happier and live longer. With a little persistence, you can begin to change your negative attitudes.

Negative thinking can become so pervasive you don't even notice it. Try enlisting the help of close friends and family. Have them tell you when you are expressing unreasonably negative ideas or thoughts.

Try reminding yourself. Notes pasted on the bathroom mirror or in your car might be silly, but if they can stop a negative thought here and there, they can be helpful.

For positive motivation, try to focus on the end results. For example, if you want to be neater around the house but feel overwhelmed or discouraged, try to think about the end results of cleaning the house. Imagine how nice it will look and how you will feel about yourself after it is clean. Imagine doing something you enjoy in your clean house. Imagine the house is **clean**.

The following is a list of steps to help you set and meet goals in your life.

## Setting Goals

1. Decide on your goals.

If you choose several, determine if they can be grouped in any way. For example, "do the dishes every night" and "keep the leaves raked" are examples of managing small chores so they don't accumulate and become overwhelming.

2. Be as specific as possible.

If you set a goal to be more outgoing, acknowledge that there will be situations where it isn't necessary

to be outgoing. Choose specific situations where you want to be outgoing, for example, at parties, at work, with your neighbors, etc.

3. State the goal positively.

"I want to eat healthier foods" as opposed to "I want to quit eating junk food."

4. Make a plan to achieve your goal.

Determine what resources you will need, what resources you have available now, and obstacles

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## Teaching Your Children Values ... (continued from page 1)

- **Don't underestimate the power of the phrase, "I'm very disappointed in you."**

Just saying these words can be punishment enough to your child.

**Remember that discipline never hits the mark unless it takes place in a loving atmosphere.** The most effective discipline includes neither brutality nor bribe; it's simply the example you set for your kids.

In the book Teaching Your Children Values, each of the 12 chapters represents a month and focuses on a particular value and how to teach it. The following values were selected as a starting point. Parents must decide which values to teach.

### Values of Being:

Honesty  
Courage  
Peaceability  
Self-Reliance and Potential  
Self-Discipline and Moderation  
Fidelity and Chastity

### Values of Giving:

Loyalty and Dependability  
Respect  
Love  
Unselfishness and Sensitivity  
Kindness and Friendliness  
Justice and Mercy

There are many methods used to teach. One way is to lead by example. What we do is always remembered more than what we say. Another way is to tell stories. Tell your children stories about great things that family members or friends have done. Have them get to know their grandparents or aunts and uncles. This is a great way to communicate with your children, and teaches them the values that you feel are important. Keep in mind that the purpose of these stories is to strengthen the moral and ethical tradition of a family.

For more great ideas, read the book entitled "Teaching Your Children Values" by Linda and Richard Eyre.

that might arise. Write down your goal and your plan, and review this periodically. This will help you stay on track.

5. Choose individual goals.

Make sure you can complete the goal yourself, and don't have to rely on changes in others for the goal to be accomplished.

6. Choose realistic goals.

A goal to gain acceptance from others or to be more liked at work is really a goal to feel good about your self. You can't make other people like you, but you can learn to feel better about yourself.

7. Reward achievement.

Sometimes it is appropriate to reward progress toward a goal or a goal achieved. For example, if your goal is to eat healthier foods, and you are succeeding, you might occasionally reward yourself with a favorite dessert. This can be a useful tool with children as well.

Another good resource on goal setting is [How to Reach Your Personal Best](#) by Gail Cohen.

# IBHP

*Contact  
information*

IBHP providers are available wherever you are located. Call the BPA Hotline to schedule an appointment with an IBHP provider near you:

**IBHP HOTLINE**  
**TOLL FREE/24 HOUR**  
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Residents of the Treasure Valley call  
**343-4180**

Visit the BPA website at:  
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